

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ANKARA 05418 091517Z

70

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SECSTATE WASHDC 4990

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USMISSION GENEVA

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AMCONSUL IZMIR

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SUBJ: MEDIA REACTION: POPPY DECISION DEVELOPMENTS

TURKISH MEDIA CONTINUED TUESDAY TO GIVE PROMINENT COVERAGE TO DEVELOPMENTS FOLLOWING THE GOT DECISION TO RESCIND THE POPPY BAN. COVERAGE IN TUESDAY MORNING EDITIONS FOCUSED MAINLY ON AN EDITORIAL IN NEWSWEEK WHICH SAID THAT IT WOULD BE A MISTAKE TO CUT OFF AID TO TURKEY BECAUSE OF THE RECISION. MONDAY NIGHT TRT TELEVISION AND RADIO NEWS ALSO PROMINENTLY PLAYED THE NEWSWEEK EDITORIAL. IN CONTRAST, ONLY LIBERAL REFORMIST MILLIYET COVERED EDITORIAL COMMENT IN AMERICAN AND EUROPEAN PAPERS SEVERELY CONDEMNING THE DECISION. IN OTHER COVERAGE, SEVERAL PAPERS, INCLUDING PRO-GOVERNMENT CUMHURIYET, BARIS AND YENI ORTAM REPORTED A SPEECH BY MINISTER OF TOURISM AND INFORMATION ORHAN BIRGIT IN WHICH HE ASSERTED THAT THE HEROIN TRAFFIC IN THE UNITED STATES AND EUROPE HAD CONTINUED DURING THE BAN. BIRGIT ALSO REASSERTED THE GOT POSITION THAT POPPY CULTIVATION IS VITAL FOR TURKISH PEASANTS AND THAT

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PAGE 02 ANKARA 05418 091517Z

ILLICIT OPIUM TRAFFIC WILL BE PREVENTED.

BARIS, AKSAM AND ZAFER ALSO CARRIED A BRIEF STORY THAT JUSTICE PARTY CHAIRMAN AND FORMER PRIME MINISTER SULEYMAN DEMIREL REITERATED HIS EARLIER STATEMENT THAT HE BELIEVED THE DECISION TO BAN POPPY CULTIVATION WAS WRONG. ACCORDING TO REPORTS DEMIREL SAID: "THE NIHAT ERIM GOVERNMENT WHICH CAME TO POWER AFTER 12 MARCH 1971 BANNED CULTIVATION OF THE POPPY. IN OUR OPINION THIS DECISION TAKEN BY THE ABOVE-PARTIES GOVERNMENT WAS WRONG.

"TURKEY IS AN INDEPENDENT COUNTRY AND SHE CAN DO WHATEVER SHE WISHES. HOWEVER, THE GOVERNMENT MUST THINK OF WHAT THE COUNTRY WILL GAIN AND WHAT IT WILL LOSE IN EVERYTHING IT DOES.

"WE HAVE ALWAYS BEEN AGAINST A TOTAL BAN ON POPPY CULTIVATION. BUT WE HAVE NEVER CLOSED OUR EARS TO THE CRIES OF OTHER NATIONS. NEITHER COULD WE HAVE CLOSED THEM. WE ARE NOT ALONE IN THE WORLD. WE HAVE TO BE TOGETHER AND COEXIST WITH OTHER NATIONS.

"THE ABOVE-PARTIES GOVERNMENT WHICH CAME AFTER THE 12 MARCH 1971 TOTALLY BANNED POPPY CULTIVATION IN SEVEN PROVINCES ON 26 JUNE 1971 AND IN OUR OPINION THIS WAS WRONG. I HAVE EXPRESSED THIS OPINION ON MANY OCCASSIONS.

"NOW THE GOVERNMENT FACES A VERY IMPORTANT DUTY. IT PROMISED TO FREE POPPY CULTIVATION. IT WILL FULFILL THIS PROMISE. IN DOING THIS, IT MUST BE ABLE TO SAFEGUARD THE OTHER INTERESTS OF TURKEY."

MILLIYET REPORTED, WITHOUT NAMING ITS SOURCE, THAT A MULTI-PARTISAN TURKISH PARLAIMENTARY DELEGATION WILL VISIT THE U.S. TO EXPLAIN TURKEY'S POSITION TO U.S. CONGRESSMEN.

IN THE ONLY EDITORIAL COMMENT NOTED IN TUESDAY EDITIONS, MILLIYET EDITOR ABDI IPEKCI URGED THE TURKISH GOVERNMENT TO EXPLAIN TO THE WORLD THE REASONS BEHIND ITS DECISION:

"...IT IS NECESSARY TO EXPLAIN," SAID IPEKCI, "...THAT TURKEY DID NOT REACH THE OPIUM DECISION IN AN IRRESPONSIBLE MANNER, BUT WITH GREAT CARE AND SENSITIVITY."

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